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# QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS IN ANY PART OF THE WORLD, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO COLONIAL AND OTHER DEPENDENT COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES

## Note verbale dated 13 October 1997 from the Permanent Mission of Bahrain to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of the State of Bahrain to the United Nations Office at Geneva presents its complements to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and has the honour to refer to documents E/CN.4/1997/NGO/58 dated 17 March 1997 and E/CN.4/1997/NGO/88 dated 1 April 1997 containing written statements from two non-governmental organizations and which allege infringements of human rights in the State of Bahrain.

The Permanent Mission would like to state that whilst the Government of the State of Bahrain fully respects the principles and motives upon which Human Rights Watch and - whose statements are under response - are founded, it must declare that their views on the human rights situation in Bahrain are, sadly, neither objective nor impartial. Their statements do not reflect, nor address, the realities of the situation in Bahrain today but are in fact based on information and allegations that are neither credible nor accurate. The Government has gone to great lengths to try and explain the true situation in Bahrain and the nature and source of the allegations directed against it by certain extremist elements, mainly outside Bahrain. Much of the material upon which these statements under response are founded originates from such elements who have little knowledge of the situation in Bahrain. They are not credible sources, have no bona fide interest in human rights but, instead, have their own agendas.

Bahrain has consistently made it clear to the international community and especially the Commission on Human Rights, that the events and activities which it has to deal with in Bahrain are terrorist related. The allegations of human rights abuses are directed from propagandists with close ties to terrorist organizations.

The situation in Bahrain is normal and the Government is, of course, well aware of the underlying social and economic issues that prevail, not just in Bahrain but in the region as a whole. The Government has made strenuous efforts to address these issues in a positive and even-handed manner. The statements of Human Rights Watch and FIDH fail to make any mention of this nor of the fact that Bahrain is a peaceful, progressive, tolerant and diverse society. Foreign expatriates work in numerous fields alongside Bahrainis and Bahrain provides a unique social environment where individuals are free to practise their religion and rituals without fear of discrimination, persecution of interference. Such religious tolerance is recognized internationally and the Government refers to the acknowledgement of this in the United States State Department Report on Religious Freedom. Contrary to what is alleged in the statements under response, Bahraini citizens participate in the running of the country and enjoy a continually developing system of government; a system that is one of consensus, not confrontation. This includes direct personal access to the country's leaders on essential issues either through the Consultative (Shura) Council, the media or through other traditional and established institutions as befits the country's Islamic and cultural particulars.

Bahrain is proud too of the social provision which it makes for its citizens - with free education and health care for all. Bahrain has become a financial, industrial, commercial, tourism and international conference centre with a worldwide reputation. All of these are achievements and systems which the Government and people of Bahrain are not prepared to see destroyed, and which must not be allowed to be destroyed, by terrorism.

Bahrain has focused heavily on its economic and social development, so as to create a modern society able to provide a good standard of living and opportunities for its peoples. According to the United Nations Developing Programme Human Development Report 1997, Bahrain ranked forty-third of all countries and also, for the third consecutive year, first in the Arab World for its achievements in development.

Throughout the troubles, the Government has dealt with the situation through its regular police force together with the rule of law in an entirely fair, sensitive and proper manner, balancing the requirements of public order and individual rights. All persons arrested in connection with the disturbances have been detained in accordance with the law for violence or terrorist-related offences. Issues of detention, trial and release are determined independently by due process of law without discrimination and in compliance with the United Nations principles regarding fair trial and treatment of prisoners.

The Government's active commitment to human issues has been demonstrated by the signing of a memorandum of understanding with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). The agreement reflects the long-standing

relationship of consultation and cooperation which exists between the two parties, and includes standard ICRC terms under which the ICRC is conducting visits to prisoners in Bahrain with the Government's full and unqualified cooperation.

Bahrain's good and positive record on human rights is well known to all countries an Bahrain has consistently cooperated with the Commission and the Centre for Human Rights to raise concerns internationally regarding human rights. The Government remains absolutely committed to the protection of individual freedoms and rights for all its citizens regardless of race, colour, creed or origin. In doing so, the Government fully recognizes its responsibilities to uphold these fundamental rights in accordance with international standards and principles, including the United Nations Charters and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The Government of Bahrain, therefore, urges the Commission on Human Rights to take into account the above and stand with Bahrain in its fight to eliminate terrorism and promote human rights in order to achieve peace and security, which are so valued and cherished by both the Bahraini people and the international community.

The Permanent Mission would be grateful if the Secretary-General could include this note as an official document of the work of the Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-fourth session under agenda item 10.

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# IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF INTOLERANCE AND OF DISCRIMINATION BASED ON RELIGION OR BELIEF

## Note verbale dated 21 October 1997 from the Chargé d'affaires of the Permanent Mission of Georgia to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the High Commissioner/Centre for Human Rights

The Permanent Mission of Georgia to the United Nations Office at Geneva presents its compliments to the High Commissioner/Centre for Human Rights and has the honour to request dissemination of the appeal of the Deputy Secretary of the National Security Council on Human Rights Issues as an official document of the Commission on Human Rights and the Human Rights Committee.

## Appeal

In accordance with article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights every person or group of persons has the right to profess and practise their own religion and use their own language.

After the tragic events in Abkhazia, Georgia 300,000 Georgians were forced to leave their homes and for five years have been waiting to return to their motherland. Today only 30,000 Georgians are living in the Gali district, where previously lived almost 100,000 Georgians.

In spite of numerous statements made by the Abkhazian side that they are committed to a peaceful solution of the conflict and recognize the right of refugees and displaced persons to return, it flagrantly violates the human rights of even the small number of those who have returned to Abkhazia.

The most painful blow for this population was the decision to ban the teaching of the Georgian language, literature and history.

In 1992/93 there were in Abkhazia 122 Georgian, 49 Abkhazian, 49 Armenian, 24 Russian and 62 mixed schools with 82,000 pupils, among them 35,000 Georgians.

In 1993 in the Gali region there were 58 Georgian schools, with 14,000 pupils and 1,800 qualified teachers. Last year there were 34 schools working with 4,514 pupils and 288 of them received Georgian certificates.

Today officially there is no single Georgian school. As to the mentioned 34 Georgian schools in the Gali district, they are working in clandestine circumstances and pupils and teachers are risking their lives every day.

We appeal to the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, international organizations, and the members of the group of friends of Georgia (the United States of America, Germany, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, France and the Russian Federation) which have been doing their best to reconcile the parties to the conflict, to bring to international attention the issue of the deprival of Georgians in Abkhazia, Georgia, of their rights to study Georgian subjects in the schools and to speak the Georgian language.

The Georgian people have brought their ancient language through tragic events during its history. The Georgian people have been victimized and destroyed by many invaders, but it has never given up its language and religion. It is not going to do it now either. But today, at the end of the twentieth century, we hope that the international community will give its help to the Georgian population in Abkhazia, Georgia, condemning the violation of human rights of those who are deprived of the right to use their own language, and will take all appropriate measures to stop the above-mentioned flagrant violations of recognized human rights on the territory enforced by the Abkhazian separatists.

(Signed): Rusudan BERIDZE
Deputy Secretary of the National
Security Council of Georgia
on Human Rights Issues

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# QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES, INCLUDING PALESTINE

# FURTHER PROMOTION AND ENCOURAGEMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS, INCLUDING THE QUESTION OF THE PROGRAMME AND METHODS OF WORK OF THE COMMISSION

## Letter dated 16 June 1997 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the Chairman of the fifty-third session of the Commission on Human Rights

GE.97-14433 (E)

16 June 1997

I have been instructed to call your attention to an ominous series of events which occurred in the last month, in which three Palestinians were abducted and brutally murdered in the Jerusalem and Ramallah areas. These murders were carried out in almost identical circumstances and manner, and a further potential murder was foiled by intervention of the Israel police.

Each of these acts of terror was perpetrated against individuals who had been involved in bona fide real estate transactions with Israelis. Two of the murder victims were Palestinians holding Israeli identity cards, as was the individual whose abduction and murder were averted.

Regrettably, these abductions and murders were preceded, and given public justification, by a wave of incitement by high-ranking Palestinian officials, advocating violent action against persons selling real estate to Israelis, and even going so far as to declare that such transactions are treason and punishable by death.

Both the circumstances of the incitement and subsequent abductions and murders, which are clearly connected, represent flagrant violations of human rights, of the rule of law and of civilized norms. They constitute an assault on the fundamental tenets of the Middle East peace process - to foster mutual trust and cooperation and to create a basis for close and amicable relations between the Palestinians and Israel.

Israel is appalled by these murders. It urges the Commission on Human Rights to condemn this phenomenon and to call upon the Palestinian leadership to take the necessary steps, unequivocally and publicly, to put an end to it.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as an official document of the Commission, under agenda items 4 and 9.

I avail myself, Excellency, of this opportunity to renew to you the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) Yosef Lamdan
Ambassador
Permanent Representative